

U.S. Attorney Pat Meehan

Remarks

July 7, 2008

Good afternoon. Earlier today, I conducted a meeting with the staff of my office. With a great deal of affection for their loyalty and dedicated service, and admittedly - no small part of emotion on my own - I informed them of my intention to resign my position as United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, effective July 15. As is customary, I sent a letter to that effect this morning to the Attorney General of the United States.

This is a job that I have loved each and every

day, during which I have had the genuine honor of serving the citizens of the United States and particularly the people of this region. I hope, that in concert with outstanding lawyers in my office, we have been able to make a difference in the lives of the people of this district through our work.

My first moment in this office began just a few days after September 11, 2001. What struck me as soon as I opened the door to the US Attorney's office, was the view. I was looking directly down on Independence Hall. At that moment two things became clear: this is a view that comes with grave responsibility, and this job is profoundly different than it was a week before September 11.

I have tried to meet the responsibility by motivating others to work in partnership to tackle problems head-on. In the face of terrorism, we rallied federal, state and local law enforcement - agencies that had little history of communication - and created an antiterrorism network that became a model for collaboration.

We partnered with district attorneys from every county to target gun violence, using federal laws to incapacitate the most dangerous offenders.

We built a nationally recognized, multi-city initiative to dismember violent street gangs - the heralded Route 222 Project - that stretched from Easton to York.

We teamed with banks and businesses to combat cyber crimes like computer intrusion and identity theft through Infra-Guard.

We joined with schools and parent groups to protect children from Internet predators and to deter kids from the dangerous and rapidly growing abuse of prescription drugs.

In each case, we used the influence of the office to inspire teamwork to prevent harm.

A second objective was to protect uniquely vulnerable citizens and assure they had an advocate. The elderly, medically fragile children, victims of

sexual exploitation and those residing in nursing and care homes became particular constituencies.

This office greatly enhanced its national reputation for monitoring health care costs and quality - often with seniors in mind.

We used the Federal False Claims Act as an enforcement tool, taking on pharmaceutical manufacturers and pharmacy benefit managers. In fact, our last five settlements recovered more than 1.3 billion dollars for state and federal health insurance programs; recapturing ill-gotten corporate profits and holding down costs to consumers. Most important, the settlements used consent decrees to change the way drugs are dispensed so that it protects patients nationwide.

When it came to protecting the vulnerable, we had to go out and find those cases because the elderly, disabled and fragile are often hidden away. They may have not an advocate. In most cases, we are it. We became their voice, and at times, perhaps their only hope.

We used federal fraud laws to police care facilities that allowed overcrowding, under staffing, poor training or substandard care.

We combated predatory lenders long before the sub-prime lending crisis was making national headlines. We jailed violators, worked with community legal services to educate consumers and persuaded banks to help victims.

We pioneered an enforcement strategy against telemarketing fraud that will protect hundreds of thousands of elderly nationwide from being swindled.

Whether it was helping college women to prevent campus, sexual assault, or veterans to avoid insurance scams, or protecting our drinking water against illegal polluters, we sought to protect the vulnerable.

A final guiding principal has been to strive for integrity. Integrity in the way we conduct ourselves, so that the people we serve may have confidence that justice is pursued vigorously but with an even hand. Integrity is the discretion and decision making behind the awesome powers of this office, where

conduct invites scrutiny. Scrutiny unearths facts and those facts frame prosecutions. I am proud of the people I have worked with here because I have seen firsthand how this principle has imbued their work.

Simultaneously, we have been vigilant in monitoring the conduct of others, particularly officials who hold the public trust. The conduct of a public official who is acting in his or her own interest, rather than in the interest of those he or she has pledged to serve, erodes the people's confidence in government.

Our work in this area is not done and it will continue beyond my tenure. But I do believe, especially in the city, that what was always accepted as "business as usual" is giving way to a new set of



rules and a new day. And there's no better proof of that than Mayor Nutter's hiring of three former prosecutors from this office to help lead the ethics reform effort.

It is difficult to fully express my feelings for this office and for the people who work here. I have often wished that every single citizen of this region could have the opportunity to spend the day here and see public service in action. For almost seven years, it has been my privilege to lead this dedicated group of men and women and to witness what can be accomplished by a simple desire to make life more livable for those we serve.

Leadership has its advantages but one of them is not the opportunity to defer to someone else when a

tough decision has to be made. There have been many such decisions over the course of seven years.

Theodore Roosevelt once said, “In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing.”

I have made each decision here based on whether I was able to answer “yes” to a simple question: “Is this the right thing for the people of this district?”

Effective July 15<sup>th</sup>, I will be leaving to enter private practice. First Assistant U.S. Attorney Laurie Magid will take over as U.S. Attorney.

(PAUSE)

One of the wonderful things about this office is that its work outlives its leaders.

I will go and these dedicated men and women will continue serving. And yet, in a different way, they will still be working for me, and for you, because as Roosevelt also said, “The government is us; we are the government, you and I.”

I was reminded of that every day for seven years when I looked down, out of my 12<sup>th</sup> floor office window on Independence Hall.

Such a view has a way of clarifying difficult

decisions. It is a view that speaks to you, demands something of you, requires your attention.

As I leave here today, my solemn hope is that my response as U.S. Attorney has done that view the justice it deserves.